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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, July 21, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Home Comfort in Summer." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

That chat we had about summer comfort a couple of weeks ago--remember when we talked about ventilation and so on? Well, that chat started something. It started a letter on its way to me. Let me read the letter to you:

"Dear Aunt Sammy: I was much interested in all you said this morning about comfort in summer time. Our family is vacationing at home this year, so I'm very anxious to make the house comfortable and the long warm days as pleasant as possible for everybody. Our house is well-built and well-insulated. It has plenty of large windows and shade trees outside, so it keeps fairly cool even on the hottest days. But even when the thermometer shows that it isn't hot inside, it looks hot, if you know what I mean. Maybe the furnishings or the color scheme are wrong. Anyways, the rooms which are cozy enough in winter, look stuffy and warm these days. I believe pleasant surroundings have a lot to do with family happiness. So I'd like my home to look cool and attractive. Won't you make some suggestions to help me out?"

My guess is that many of us would like to convert our houses into summer homes this year, to make our rooms look summery, airy and cool. Fortunately, the specialists have lots of good ideas to help on this very problem.

If this were once-upon-a-time, the specialists would probably advise removing all the heavy upholstered furniture, the great thick dark rugs and the heavy dark hangings--curtains, portieres and so on, and substituting for these the summer furniture--cool wicker, reed or light painted furniture, small grass or rag rugs and light summery curtains.

But this isn't once-upon-a-time. It's today. And most of us are living in smaller houses or apartments where we don't have two sets of furniture to go with the seasons and where maybe we don't even have an attic to store our extra furniture in. We need to know how to use what we have to make our living quarters comfortable and summery.

Well, say the experts, it all goes back to the good old rule of simple living to suit the season. Simple furnishings to give the house that cool and comfortable summer look. And simple furnishings save work for the housekeeper. Many things that make a room look cozy in winter, make it seem stuffy and overcrowded in summer and add to the job of dusting and cleaning, because the win-

dows and doors are all open and more dust is in the air. So the first thing to do is to pack away the extras, the decorations you don't need for simple summer living. Get them out of the way where they won't collect summer dust. Any heavy, warm looking furnishings may just as well take a vacation during the warm weather, too. That thick, woolly, dark-red rug, for example, those heavy velvet portieres, those silk curtains and mohair cushions--they'll all last longer if they have a rest during the summer months and you'll last longer if you don't have to clean and look after them. Summer dust and summer sun are both hard on fabrics. It's a matter of economy to keep your nice things packed away during this season. So take down the heavy curtains, clean them and pack them away in a clean safe place for the hot months. Woolen rugs deserve the same treatment. If you haven't already done it, this is the time to clean them, air and sun them and roll them on a pole. Then wrap them carefully in moth proof paper or even many thicknesses of newspaper for moths don't like the ink on newspaper; and store them away until cooler weather calls them into use again.

When the heavy curtains are down, then is a convenient time to wash the windows. Here's a job that the children, home from school, can do and one that they'll enjoy. Summer housekeeping ought to be a cooperative affair so that Mother can have something of a let-up during the hot weather. If the cooperative idea of household jobs is introduced wisely, the children of different ages will be glad to take their part. Take this window-washing business. I can speak from experience on that for I remember one very pleasant summer morning when my brother and I were delegated to wash all the first floor windows. We were about eleven or twelve years old. He did the outside, I worked inside. We made a game to see who could finish each pane of glass in the shortest time. You may be sure we checked up on each other if any small spots were left soiled. One of the amusing features of that job was the series of funny faces my brother made through the glass at me as we worked.

Somebody stop me quick. This reminiscing about childhood won't do on a busy morning when the project in hand is to summerize the house.

Well, as I was saying, when the heavy curtains are down and the windows are all washed clean and clear, then you can put up some little, light fresh summer curtains, if you like. Such curtains add so much to the pleasant appearance of the room and cost so little. I've seen most attractive summer curtains made of tinted cheesecloth costing only a few cents a yard. Beautiful curtain fabrics are less expensive this year than ever before. You have a choice of sheer voile, theatrical gauze, net for glass curtains. Cotton crashes, chintz and cretonne in light colors may be had for cool looking draperies. Many of them are sunfast and tubfast, too, so that they can be easily washed and won't be harmed by summer dust or sudden showers.

Now about the floors in this summer home of yours. In place of the heavy floor covering, scatter rugs here and there are all that is needed.

The hooked, braided, or crocheted rugs that you made during the winter to use with your big rig serve very well for summer floor covering. Those plain, sturdy inexpensive grass or fiber rugs that are sometimes called porch rugs are being used a great deal, too inside for summer. They are smooth and have a hard finish so that they feel cool and also shed dust.

There's still the furniture to consider. And you know how hot furniture upholstered in velour, velvet, mohair, tapestry, or even denim can look.

These fabrics which are so rich, beautiful and warm-looking under the light of winter lamps lose their charm in this weather. If we can't store them we can cover them up and make the furniture cooler as well as protect it. Let's dress our warm-looking furniture in cool-looking slip covers for the summer. These covers are not only decorative but they save the fine upholstery from dust and sun. Thus we get rid of the woolly warm feeling of our heavy chairs and lounges and make the room look fresh and summery at the same time.

We had a talk about slip covers in the spring so I won't stop to discuss them much today. But they are well-worth the time you spend making them. Good slip cover materials maybe very inexpensive. The best fabrics for the purpose have a smooth finish, are closely woven to keep dust from sifting through and will stay looking crisp and new. Chintz, Belgian linen, Jaspe cloth, percale, gingham and poplin all fulfill these requirements and come both in plain colors and attractive combinations.

Of course, with hungry little moths about, as they are likely to be, even in the best of homes--with these dangerous insects around you have to be particularly careful to go over the upholstered furniture every now and then, and especially before slip covers are put on. A thorough cleaning with a brush or the vacuum cleaner attachment helps. You see, if there are any moths or moth eggs on the surface of your woollen furniture covering, they'll have a fine time eating away well protected under the slip cover.

Some of the other home decorations that deserve a rest in summer are all velvet or silk table scarfs and covers and all pieces of winter bric-a-brac. Leave the tables bare or covered with simple linen covers. Somehow bare spaces often look cool--bare walls, smooth stretches of bare polished floor or uncovered tables. Bowls of flowers look more summery than winter bric-a-brac. Any silk lamp shades may also go into retirement. Simple plain parchment shades will be more suitable for the simple surroundings. And many clever housekeepers have made these themselves out of sturdy paper.

Sometimes you can make the room look cooler just by changing the furniture around. Turn the reading desk and chairs about so that the hot afternoon sun doesn't pour in on them. If all winter the furniture has been arranged so that the fireplace has been the center of interest, move things about so that a window will be featured instead. A friend of mine has in her living room a comfortable little chintz settee. All winter this has a place in front of the hearth. But when spring comes my friend moves it to a side wall between two windows where it faces another window framing a wide view of the garden.

Have I mentioned color in this matter of cool houses? Color is most important. It has such a definite effect on the eye. Shades of red and yellow are generally considered warm colors, you know; while shades of blue, green, and gray are cool. Rich reds, glowing yellow and orange may bring cheer in winter, but in summer the refreshing colors are cool apple greens, soft blues, soft greys and so on. If you use yellow or pink, its best to choose the soft, pale, cooler shades.

Tomorrow: "Summer Breakfast Menus."

